

Vladislav Shapovalov  
Image Diplomacy

17 November 2017 — 25 January 2018

MMOMA, Gogolevsky Blvd 10/2

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V-A-C Foundation presents *Image Diplomacy*, the fourth and final exhibition in the framework of the experimental programme *Carte Blanche*, in which the Moscow Museum of Modern Art (MMOMA) invites art institutions to implement their own curatorial initiatives. Curated by V-A-C Foundation's Anna Ilchenko, *Image Diplomacy* is the first solo exhibition for Milan based Russian artist Vladislav Shapovalov.

*Image Diplomacy*\* is a research project and body of work combining photography, original documents and film. The exhibition focuses on highlighting aspects of how the political vision of the mid-20th century was constructed also thanks to landmark exhibitions. This critical investigation is done through Shapovalov's study of exhibition strategies, photographic and film content of the time, with the aid of state and public archive material from Italy, Russia and the United States.

The story of *Image Diplomacy* started in Milan, where Shapovalov found a photographic archive consisting of more than 100 folders. Each folder contained a set of photographs and a guide for putting together a series of exhibitions. During the Cold War, such folders were distributed by an organisation called VOKS (an acronym for the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries) in order to spread a positive image of the Soviet Union across the world. One of the works to be shown in Moscow is the installation *I Left My Heart in Rhodesia* (2017),\*\* where the artist attempts to reconstruct one of the 'ready-made' exhibitions that he came across, which in reality may or may not have ever taken place.

A central work is the film *Image Diplomacy*, made specifically for the exhibition. In the film, the artist compares the cultural strategies adopted in the USSR and the USA during the Cold War, taking the famous American photographic exhibition *The Family of Man* — originally shown at MoMA — and exhibitions created by VOKS as examples. The film is set inside the archive of Association Italy Russia in Milan, at the Film Archive in Bologna, and at the Clervaux Castle in Luxembourg, home to the UNESCO recognised photographic exhibition entitled *The Family of Man*. Offering infinitely diverse images of life in the 50s, *The Family of Man* consisted of hundreds of photographs and went on to influence both the future of exhibition making and public opinion at the time.

Despite being based on historical materials, Shapovalov's work uses the past as a means of reflection on current social and political relations and how they are represented culturally.

A series of talks and workshops by Russian and foreign researchers in the fields of cinematography, visual culture, human rights and linguistics will accompany the exhibition.

Vladislav Shapovalov is an artist, researcher and editor living and working in Moscow and Milan. He is a former member of the art-group *Radek Community* (1999-2007). As a solo artist he has participated in the exhibitions: *The False Calculations Presidium* (2012), V-A-C international group show *The Way of Enthusiasts*, held during the 13th Architectural Biennale in Venice (2012), *The School of Kyiv*. Kyiv Biennial (2015), *Atlas [of the ruins] of Europe* in Madrid (2016) and *A Thousand Roaring Beasts: Display Devices For A Critical Modernity*, Seville (2017). He was a fellow at International Fellowship Program for *Art and Theory* 2016–2017 at Künstlerhaus Büchsenhausen, Innsbruck.

Curator: Anna Ilchenko.

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Launched in spring 2017, **Carte Blanche** is a new experimental programme by MMOMA, inviting art institutions to implement their own curatorial initiatives at MMOMA sites. With Carte Blanche, MMOMA aims to develop creative dialogue and synergy, strengthening cultural ties between state museums and other institutions. Guest institutions will select the theme, artists and format of the exhibitions they present, opening up new ideas to MMOMA's visitors and giving invited institutions the opportunity to address issues such as the implementation of their projects in a different context and familiarity with new audiences. Building on the activities of the museum, it will further MMOMA's ambition to broaden current perceptions of contemporary art.

**V-A-C Foundation** is the first institution to participate and presents four projects which analyse the format of museums and exhibitions, looking at new possibilities as well as existing boundaries and limitations. It expands on V-A-C's long-term programme which explores the role of the contemporary museum.

V-A-C Foundation is dedicated to the development and international presentation of Russian contemporary culture – across a multitude of forms and within the framework of a joint exhibition, educational, and publishing programme. V-A-C Foundation considers artistic production as central to its activity and essential for understanding contemporary cultural processes and stimulating new answers to its challenges.

The opportunities V-A-C Foundation provides, to engage with and interrogate international cultural practices, aim to expand the platform for homegrown talent and encourage an independent artistic language. As a key speaker for contemporary Russia, V-A-C Foundation establishes new cross-cultural dialogues and incites an exchange of ideas through new collaborations and alternative settings for bringing different artistic practices together within a single vision for arts and culture.

V-A-C has recently launched Palazzo delle Zattere, a new exhibition and education space in Venice and work is underway to develop a major art site in Moscow, designed by Renzo Piano Building Workshop, due to open in 2019.

[www.v-a-c.ru](http://www.v-a-c.ru)

**Moscow Museum of Modern Art (MMOMA)** was founded in 1999. It is the first state Russian museum that concentrates exclusively on the art of the 20th and 21st centuries. Today the Museum, with its five venues in the historic centre of the city, plays a vital part in the Moscow art scene. The Museum's permanent collection represents major stages in the formation and development of the avant-garde, especially in Russia. One of the Museum's priorities is to promote young and emerging artists, bringing them into the contemporary artistic process and to create inclusive projects.

[mmoma.ru](http://mmoma.ru)



**CARTE BLANCHE**